

LINSY SISEMORE 1940 FORT KLAMATH, OREGON 575  
"MEMORIES OF A PIONEER BOYHOOD"  
of Fort Klamath Mar. 30, 1940

I have been for the last couple of years making notes of things I remember of my early life and events as I remember them. It is a long trail to try hard back over. Naturally this will be a record of events as they come to my mind. After starting this, rambling record I began seriously think at 70 we are prone to exaggerate - on events, not intentionally of course but it seems we just do. one does not notice it in himself, of course - as he does in others whom he has known since boyhood. so I shall not over draw on things but record them - as I know they were.

My parents, John Sismore and Mary Sismore, (Formerly Mrs Enoch Pelton whose maiden name was Mary Roe, each crossed the plains by ox team. Mother in 1852, father's date I do not know definitely from what is told of his life in the west I conclude it was about the same date.

Father was born in Kentucky  
Mother in Missouri;

Father came the southern route into California, Mother by the north-  
ern down the Columbia River. I know but little of father's life up to 1858 when he came to Oregon. Father was born 1835. Mother 1837.

Father died 1910, Mother 1902  
 Father was an orphan at 12 years and spent some of early life on a horse ranch, became a jockey and rode until he became too heavy. He was, at maturity 6'4 and weighed around 220# dark complexioned. He never attended school a day but had a good mind and was very apt in figures mentally. In fact he had a lot of common sense and was very gentlemanly. He enjoyed most of any sport horse racing. He too was a poker player - as was most of the California miners where he spent several years. When he came to Oregon he soon joined Pettin, mother's first husband who died early in the 60's, in land and timber business. They located in Sam's Valley a part of Jackson Co. The valley in which they located was named for Captain Sam captor of the Rogue Indians, a tribe now extinct.

I do not know when the Poes came to southern Oregon. I have heard mother speak of having worked for the Ish family who had a large ranch near Jacksonville by her marriage to Pettin she had 3 sons Horace, James & John. John was the youngest and was 9 years older than me. The partnership continued on S. Prainmont Pettin until 1885  
 The census grants spoke of the year 1852

-as the year the <sup>low</sup> colery was bad. My grand mother and one of her ~~first~~ daughters were buried at the road side near the Dalls. Mother never <sup>knew</sup> just where. They were out of food when they reached the Columbia. Relief came from Oregon City but charged \$1<sup>00</sup> per pound for flour and many of them gave their last \$ for food. They went by draft down to the mouth of the Willamette River Truly pioneering the west.

My first recollection is to 1875 when father had a new home built. It was a large 2 story 9 room place which burned down in 1882. It was a long job building it as the lumber had to be hand dressed. That was the first frame house I can remember - of being in. Our old home was a 1 1/2 story frame log of rooms.

I remember very well our first year in the new home we were visited by D. S. K. Buick, who was a grange organizer. He gave my first led pencil and cautioned me not to mark on the new house. I don't remember of ever having had any money up to that time.

About 1/4 mile from the new home was a school house where I attended my first school. The teacher was a tall slender Irishman with a long red beard. His name was Brogan and was I scared of him? Our first task

was to learn to say the alphabet forward and backward. As I remember now I had them about learned when our 3 months was finished. That was all the school we had in a year except when we hoped to have enough <sup>money</sup> for a spring term which was not often. There were no grades in school at that time, one teacher would have as many as 60 pupils ranging from the first to the fifth reader.

You can imagine the work a teacher had to do. Some of the older pupils had as high as 5 studies. The teacher's wage - as long as I attended school was \$33 $\frac{1}{3}$  per month. Many of our teachers were young girls whose education would about compare to an 8<sup>th</sup> grade pupil of today. The teacher boarded with the pupils, time with a family depended on the number of pupils in the family.

On the ranches Pettor and Father had acquired, there <sup>were</sup> some orchards, new settlers would buy apples, I remember seeing father sell two wagon boxes full, one wagon load he sold for \$1.50 as they were picked from the trees, the other load he sold for .50 cts - as those were picked off of the ground. This illustrates the market condition with us at that time. It was all local and no one had any money to speak of, wheat was hauled to the mill and ground, miller kept part of the flour

as his pay we would then dust out the wheat  
2 acres, felt them with flour haul it home  
later trade it <sup>to</sup> the merchants for what  
we had to buy, or sell it along with  
bacon and lard to miners. One of our  
best markets was Kerby, now a small  
village - out from Grants Pass.

In 1871 father bought "The Salt Works".  
There was a small satten spring about  
20 miles from Jacksonville. The water  
was run down from the hillside into 60  
gallon iron kettles which were on a crude  
rock furnace. When the kettles were full  
a fire was lighted in the furnace. The  
water evaporated leaving the salt  
which was sold. I have wished since  
I had asked how much salt he got from  
60 gallons of water.

I forgot to mention our school teachers  
received \$100. for three months  $33\frac{1}{3}$   
per month.

When I was a boy the feeling was  
pretty strong between northern and  
southern people my people being  
southerners were a little leary of a  
"Yank" and as I remember then the  
northerners were a little better traders  
than southerners.

Harvest was a big job most of the  
ranches had a reaper, a machine  
which cut very much like a mowers  
except it had a reel which struck  
the grain as it came in contact

with the sickle causing it to fall on a platform where it was carried a few feet, then platform was dumped leaving the grain in a bunch. That was followed by men who took a "wisp" a handful full of the grain and bounced the bunch, stood at one end and rush on to the next dump. Threshing was done by horse power 8 or 12 spans of horses were hitched to long sweeps and went around and around turning a big cog wheel which turned a small pinion on the end of the "tumbling rod" which operated the separator. All the men boarded at the farm home. It took a pretty good sized crop to feed the men and horses.

In 1869 father took a drove of hogs and a pack train from Jackson Co to the mines in Idaho that being the year I was born I only remember his telling me of it. I do not know what the distance was nor how long he was on the road. It was probably 500 miles and at the rate a hog travels it sure was no small job. Then to ride a mule on the return trip it must have been a six months trip.

One of the conveniences we had that you will never know was a fly trap. It was a fly trap. Easily made and very effective. Two 12" boards 4 ft long hanging from the kitchen ceiling about 1 inch apart the inner sides smeared with sargin syrup.

in passing one would slip the board together, you would be surprised how many you would kill. To make it more effective one of us children would stand by the table while the threshing crew, usually 12 or 14 men were eating with a stick four or five feet long over which had been folded old news paper, then slit into strips 6 or 8 inches long, as we would wave that over the table it would keep the flies off of the food and drive them to the trap.

One of the interesting sights of my young life was the first coal oil lamp to come into Sun's Valley. Mr. Gairard, a "yankie" got one and while it was interesting to see were surprised to think one would install in his home a thing so dangerous. It sure was an improvement over our "slut" lamp a saucer of lard with a cotton string braided tightly in the lard and one end of the string over the edge for a wick.

As there were no grades in school and so many classes, if one had to stay out of school on account of sickness or to help with the ranch work and lost too much time he would at beginning of next term, start in at the first of his reader with the new pupils in that reader. I think I must have climbed the second reader ladder a number of times before a got to the top and got into the third.

The Chirren, of whom there were a great many mining along the streams